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PLANNING

In September of 2013, the City Council met in a retreat to review the accomplishments and challenges of the 2008 Five-Year Strategic Plan and to set a vision for the next Five-Year Plan.

As a result of this review and visioning process, the Council identified six major themes for the next Five-Year Strategic Plan: Economic Development; Image & Brand; Services; Environment; Organizational Culture; and Community Relations & Development.

With these major themes identified, senior staff participated in a follow-up retreat where each theme was studied and major goals were identified. Finally, teams of employees from across the organization took on the task of developing a set of specific strategies to achieve these goals. This work is now represented in the 2014 Five-Year Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan provides a road map of where the City is going and how it intends to get

there. It includes the City's stated vision and mission as well as the set of guiding principles and service standards staff will follow as the plan is implemented.

With the development and implementation of the 2014 Five-Year Strategic Plan, the City of Thomasville has reaffirmed its commitment to the community, to exceeding the community's expectations and to creating a community we are all proud to call home.

CITY MANAGER



On behalf of the City Council and staff, I am pleased to present the 2014-2018 Five-Year Strategic Plan for the City of Thomasville.

The City of Thomasville's Strategic Plan represents a commitment to serving the community. The plan sets direction for the community's future, guiding the City's decision-making and resource allocation.

The Strategic Plan serves as a critical component of a larger system of planning for our community's success, which includes the annual budget process, capital and technology prioritization and financial planning.

Although this document formalizes the goals of the plan, we should note that the Strategic

Plan is a living document, one that may be changed if necessary. The City Council meets annually to refine the items that make up the plan and to ensure that the plan is reflective of the community's changing needs.

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.”

– Pablo Picasso

These words by Pablo Picasso are echoed in the work that is accomplished daily as the City Council and staff work together to achieve our goals. A great deal of work has gone into creating

our Strategic Plan, and even more will go into bringing our vision to fruition. I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the City Council for its vision and dedication to this process and to City staff for their excellent work in facilitating and managing the plan's creation.

As we move forward with the implementation of the Strategic Plan, we are focused on creating a safe, thriving community, one that you are proud to call home. We thank you for the honor of serving you.

Sincerely,

Steve Sykes

City Manager/Utilities Superintendent

ACHIEVING SUCCESS

In order to achieve the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan, there must be accountability. For this reason, we will set annual benchmarks for achievement and link objectives in the plan to departmental goals. Performance measures, required resources and target dates for completion will also be identified. Progress reports will be provided to the City Council and the community to clearly demonstrate our successes and achievements.

OUR MISSION

We create and deliver exceptional service to our community through a culture of safety, courtesy, professionalism and efficiency.

OUR VISION

An innovative organization exceeding community expectations.

OUR VALUES

Teamwork

We are a diverse group of individuals working together to serve the community.

Respect

We will be humble and will treat each other the way we want to be treated.

Integrity

We are honest, fair and accountable for our actions.

Innovation

We reward creativity and imagination that improves service.

Service

We are proud of our community and strive to serve with excellence.

CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

As an organization, the City of Thomasville is committed to delivering outstanding customer service through key customer service standards related to gracious problem solving, attentiveness, verbal skills and attitude. Our staff pledges to:

- Serve customers with care, courtesy and professionalism.
- Make customers feel important and appreciated.
- Be good listeners when speaking with our customers.
- Show empathy to our customers' concerns.
- Work cooperatively with fellow team members to assure quality service delivery.
- Be considerate, honest, fair and accountable for our actions.



Goal One

Economic Development

Goal

To develop and serve a diverse, thriving economy.

Strategic Objectives

1. Develop a plan for a business incubator to provide opportunities for start-up/entrepreneur opportunities.
2. Create a plan for the development of the Event Center, including a renovation schedule, funding source, space allocation and staffing plan.
3. Prepare a Red Hills Business Park development plan that will identify an opening date and create a marketing plan with restrictive covenants.
4. Develop a plan for the redevelopment of the Southwestern State Hospital property and develop a plan for the recruitment of a Continuing Care Retirement Community.
5. Identify areas for possible Opportunity Zone expansion.

Strategies

Objective 1: Develop a plan for a business incubator to provide opportunities for start-up/entrepreneur opportunities.

Action Items		
1	Identify a location, considering the various needs of entrepreneurs and the small business community.	
2	Identify partners and resources.	
3	Identify the local makers and entrepreneurs currently in our communities and work with these individuals to identify needs and suggestions.	

Objective 2: Create a plan for the development of the Event Center, including a renovation schedule, funding source, space allocation and staffing plan.

Action Items		
1	<p>Conduct a needs assessment that fully considers the current and future uses such a space would provide for the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the community events such as existing festivals and the rental expenses for tenting and other temporary venues that would be unnecessary with Event Center space. Consider opportunities for conferences, corporate meetings, retreats and other business functions that could be hosted in this location. Determine the benefit of available space for balls, galas, dances and other events hosted by charitable organizations as well as the benefit of having space available as a mixed-use facility for artistic endeavors. 	
2	Determine the feasibility and design of the existing building, taking into consideration the needs assessment. Determine space allocations for various uses to be assigned to Event Center and staff to be housed in facility.	
3	Formalize design and use with formal building plans. Appoint a project manager and establish a renovation schedule.	
4	Establish a renovation budget and identify funding sources.	
5	Address branding of Events Center and determine formal name. Begin marketing campaign that will encompass identifying initiatives and potential projects and events. Consider case studies of similar facilities.	

Strategies

Objective 3: Prepare a Red Hills Business Park development plan that will identify an opening date and create a marketing plan with restrictive covenants.

Action Items		
1	Complete construction of the Red Hills Business Park, including roads, stormwater management, permitting, utilities and other infrastructure.	
2	Recruit businesses for the Red Hills Business Park. Coordinate efforts with the Thomasville-Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, Payroll Development Authority and the Georgia Department of Economic Development.	
3	Research and offer marketing incentives that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property tax discounts or abatements • Bond financing • Availability of loan programs • Land donation or discount • BEST – Georgia’s job tax credit • QuickStart training program • Site improvements • Preliminary office space • Relocation assistance • Reduced utility pricing • Reduced permitting fees 	
4	Inventory tax credits (Freeport exemption).	
5	Locate and research model covenants and adopt the City of Thomasville’s architectural standards to address issues for commercial buildings involving exterior finishes, mechanical systems, architectural details, fencing, etc.	

Strategies

Objective 4: Develop a plan for the redevelopment of the Southwestern State Hospital property and develop a plan for the recruitment of a Continuing Care Retirement Community.

Action Items	
1	<p>Develop an inventory list for the facility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 208 acres, 18 buildings totaling 400,000 square feet, connected by permanent breezeways • Campus contains amenities including green space, ponds, bowling alley, auditorium, cafeteria, indoor basketball court, public restrooms, private rooms with connected bathrooms. • Ideally situated for an institutional/hospital environment.
2	Consider limitations to development regarding current debt assigned to the facility by the state, current zoning and federal covenant.
3	Identify potential users, developers and possible investors.

Objective 5: Identify areas for possible Opportunity Zone expansion.

Action Items	
1	Identify opportunity zones and urban redevelopment areas.
2	Rank identified areas with regard to the greatest need and feasibility for redevelopment, economic development and infrastructure improvements.
3	<p>Collect and compile data and create corresponding GIS map layers for potential opportunity zone/urban redevelopment areas. Consider information such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics • Economic data • Building conditions • Crime statistics • Land use/zoning • Existing business and expansion potential
4	Prepare comprehensive urban redevelopment and revitalization area plans and expansion opportunities for areas selected for development.
5	Develop marketing plan for newly created opportunity zones. Publicize designation to encourage business community to use available resources.



Goal Two

Image & Brand

GOAL

To reflect our quality of life and commitment to community success.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Identify segments of streets for possible asphalt removal to expose additional historic brick paving in the downtown area.
2. Develop a phased plan to improve the gateways and corridors into Thomasville.
3. Develop a plan for improving sidewalks.
4. Identify group housing challenges and solutions.

Strategies

Objective 1: Identify segments of streets for possible asphalt removal to expose additional historic brick paving in the downtown area.

Action Items		
1	Identify areas of brick-paved streets to repair along Jackson Street and Broad Street.	
2	Prepare and conduct bid process to secure contractor to repair brick along Jackson Street and Broad Street.	
3	Prepare and conduct bid process to secure contractor to remove asphalt and repair brick on Remington Avenue, between Broad Street and Madison Street.	

Objective 2: Develop a phased plan to improve the gateways and corridors into the city.

Action Items		
1	Prioritize improvement to corridors into Thomasville based on traffic count and tourism information.	
2	Improve corridors from the downtown area outward, working toward the city limits. Address sidewalks, signage, landscaping and vacant lots.	
3	Remove asphalt and uncover brick paving in downtown areas.	
4	Continue addressing unfit structures and vacant buildings through code enforcement.	
5	Work with property owners to improve sites with regard to fencing, signage, landscaping, etc. Investigate grant-funding opportunities for assistance.	
6	Work with Chamber of Commerce and Payroll Development Authority to fill vacant buildings and properties.	
7	Address utility infrastructure through underground utilities and/or replacement/repair to existing utility poles and lighting.	
8	Address landscaping, including trees, roses and other alternatives.	
9	Work with Police Department, Code Enforcement, Solid Waste and other organizations to address litter control.	

Strategies

Objective 3: Develop a plan for improving sidewalks.

Action Items		
1	Identify areas where sidewalk improvement and repairs are needed.	
2	Identify areas where ADA handicap ramps will be installed.	
3	Secure funding for sidewalk repairs and improvements.	
4	Establish a work order flow for sidewalk improvements, including GIS input.	

Objective 4: Identify group housing challenges and solutions.

Action Items		
1	Identify current housing issues, including group homes, personal care homes, assisted living facilities, boarding houses, and homeless shelters and camps. Consider current ordinances, state laws and safety concerns.	
2	Review current codes, both state and local, and city ordinances that address group homes, personal care homes and the needs of the homeless population. Create a plan of action to address these issues as they relate to group home ordinances, personal assisted homes, and homeless shelters and possible locations.	
3	Review possible locations for a local homeless shelter.	
4	Tour area homeless facilities and investigate issues such as capacity, funding, services, security and liability insurance issues.	
5	Investigate current facilities such as Southwestern State Hospital campus to determine possible use as a multi-purpose facility for homeless, temporary shelter and other City uses.	



Goal Three

Services

GOAL

To expand existing services and develop new opportunities to serve our community.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Identify new revenue sources to offset the cost of providing essential services

Objective 1: Identify new revenue sources to offset the cost of providing essential services.

Action Items		
1	Conduct a staff survey regarding ideas on new revenue sources.	
2	Assign potential new revenue sources to the appropriate department to research for feasibility.	
3	Develop a feasibility assessment to be completed that will analyze the new revenue source.	
4	Review feasibility assessment and determine course of future action.	



Goal Four

Environment

GOAL

To preserve, protect and enhance our community's resources for present and future generations.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Identify locations and status of abandoned gas stations and properties in the city.
2. Re-evaluate the stormwater management plan.
3. Prepare a strategy for fleet conversion to compressed natural gas.

Strategies

Objective 1: Identify locations and status of abandoned gas stations and properties in the city.

Action Items	
1	Identify and locate all active/inactive gas stations within the city of Thomasville.
2	Classify all gas stations as active or inactive by field verification.
3	Classify inactive gas stations as “other in-use” or “abandoned.”
4	Compile a list of types of gas stations with owner’s contact information.
5	Create GIS map layer with legend identifying location and type of station.
6	Identify all locations currently undergoing monitoring, testing and remediation.
7	Identify challenges related to redevelopment, including clean-up, tank removal, etc.
8	Identify redevelopment types that are compatible with current zoning. Provide an opportunity for property owners to meet with staff to identify possibilities for redevelopment.
9	Develop incentives and suggested marketing strategies for property owners to complete redevelopment opportunities.

Objective 2: Re-evaluate the stormwater management plan.

Action Items	
1	Assess, repair and maintain the existing area detention facilities.
2	Rewrite the stormwater management and related ordinances to include a wetlands buffer. Promote the use of stormwater best management practices in both new construction and redevelopment to reduce runoff and improve water quality.
3	Review City facilities and operational practices for opportunities to reduce stormwater runoff and erosion.
4	Educate employees, developers, builders and the community on the importance of stormwater management.
5	Identify and inspect private stormwater facilities and encourage regular maintenance through Code Enforcement.

Strategies

Objective 3: Prepare a strategy for fleet conversion to compressed natural gas.

Action Items		
1	Identify criteria for conversion, considering mileage, fuel usage, maintenance records and age of vehicles.	
2	Identify vehicles to be converted and determine a conversion schedule.	
3	Evaluate conversion vs. purchase of CNG vehicles. Consider whether current age of vehicle warrants conversion or replacement.	
4	Evaluate existing CNG vehicles and determine what commercially available vehicles meet the needs of our fleet.	



Goal Five

Organizational Culture

Goal

To be one team, committed to serving our community, innovatively.

Strategic Objectives

1. Establish consistent customer service standards for both internal and external customers.
2. Evaluate the existing safety program and make recommendations for improvement.
3. Create a strategy to improve employee understanding and implementation of the vision and mission of our organization.
4. Conduct an organization-wide facilities needs assessment.

Strategies

Objective 1: Establish consistent customer service standards for both internal and external customers.

Action Items		
1	Develop organizational customer service standards that address areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General standards • Telephone etiquette • Voice mail • Written correspondence • In-person communication • Two-way radios • Training, communicating and visibility • Accountability and commitment 	
2	Conduct customer service training for all departments.	
3	Make standards visible, adding them to the intranet and including them in the employee policy manual.	
4	Hold employees accountable by creating an escalation list, issuing customer survey cards, conducting 'mystery shopper' programs and ensuring all employees have signed a commitment to the customer service standards.	
5	Create a plan for ongoing training and communication. Include training in new employee orientation schedules.	

Objective 2: Evaluate the existing safety program and make recommendations for improvement.

Action Items		
1	Develop an understanding of the current safety program and the safety programs of other organizations.	
2	Review current safety manual. Develop and implement changes to the safety manual.	
3	Conduct a staff survey related to the current Awards of Excellence program. Use results to develop and implement program changes.	
4	Track accidents by department and type of accident.	

Strategies

Objective 3: Create a strategy to improve employee understanding and implementation of the vision and mission of our organization.

Action Items		
1	Conduct an initial survey that will gauge the current level of understanding of the City's vision and mission.	
2	Develop new posters to be displayed in all City areas that would feature employees who are nominated by their direct reports as staff members who embrace the organization's mission and vision.	
3	Work to incorporate a consistent voice that echoes the mission and vision in all communication pieces, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletters • Weekly updates • News releases and media contact • Collateral material • Website language 	
4	Utilize the Employee Most Innovative (EMI) program to reward employees for innovative ideas, strengthening the application to better distinguish between innovation and suggestion.	
5	Develop a leadership academy to identify and educate future leaders within our existing staff to help them develop the skills and tools to manage City initiatives and demonstrate the mission and vision throughout interactions and accomplishment of goals.	

Strategies

Objective 4: Conduct an organization-wide facilities needs assessment.

Action Items	
1	Establish a facilities review committee to maintain an accurate record of existing City-owned/ leased properties and spaces.
2	<p>Conduct a phased facilities condition assessment, consisting of questionnaires, site visits, existing document review to establish baseline data on properties and spaces that are owned and leased by the City.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1: Will include all primary use buildings and structures. • Phase 2: Will include secondary use buildings and structures. • Phase 3: Will include all remaining buildings and structures considered to be support in function. • Phase 4: Will include any remaining buildings, structures, or ancillary items not captured in previous phases.
3	Conduct a future facility needs assessment.
4	Establish a repository for all data compiled from needs assessment and review. Implement procedures that will maximize the use of existing properties and space when considering new construction or property acquisition.



Goal Six

Community Relations & Development

Goal

To provide a secure and engaging community for our citizens.

Strategic Objectives

1. Develop a strategy to provide underserved youth with increased opportunities in theater and arts.
2. Create a plan to provide scheduled community events downtown involving the closing of street segments for entertainment.
3. Prepare a strategy for improving fire safety and patrol through code enforcement activities.
4. Establish a renewed neighborhood revitalization plan removing dilapidated houses.
5. Design a recruitment plan for attracting young adults to our community.
6. Develop a plan and schedule for the completion of the bike/walking trail.

Strategies

Objective 1: Develop a strategy to provide underserved youth with increased opportunities in theater and arts.

Action Items		
1	Determine the target audience and whether or not the identified youth are underserved or unaware.	
2	Create relationships with organizations offering events and develop a mechanism to share information that will encourage participation.	
3	Encourage organizations to send information about their events to the City and investigate media sources in order to share information with public.	
4	Identify media sources to help with event promotion.	
5	Utilize City of Thomasville Community Relations events to bring exposure to annual arts, theater and cultural community events.	
6	Establish a relationship between art, theater and cultural event providers and media sources.	

Objective 2: Create a plan to provide scheduled community events downtown involving the closing of street segments for entertainment.

Action Items		
1	Revive "First Fridays" downtown to promote shopping, dining, and socializing with family and friends. Include downtown businesses and restaurants in planning process and develop a consistent event schedule for continuity.	

Objective 3: Prepare a strategy for improving fire safety and patrol through code enforcement activities.

Action Items		
1	Revise and update Q-Alert system and address the difficulties in finding property owners and dealing with vagrants.	

Strategies

Objective 4: Establish a renewed neighborhood revitalization plan removing dilapidated houses.

Action Items		
1	Compile and prioritize a list of existing dilapidated and abandoned structures.	
2	Create a team tasked with leading a citywide plan focusing on specific areas or districts of priority.	
3	Hold quarterly workgroup meetings to monitor progress and remain on task.	

Objective 5: Design a recruitment plan for attracting young adults to our community.

Action Items		
1	Create a dedicated community marketing division to build a community brand which highlights Thomasville's youth-friendly aspects.	
2	Create more conducive zoning which will allow for more adaptive uses of properties.	
3	Hold quarterly team meetings to monitor progress and remain on task.	
4	Promote youth involvement within community boards, commissions, and authorities through audits for representation and fair/equal application processes.	

Strategies

Objective 6: Develop a plan and schedule for the completion of the bike/walking trail.

Action Items		
1	Complete phase one, addressing all challenges and concerns include safety crossings at Fletcher Street and the railroad crossing.	
2	Complete phase two, addressing all challenges and concerns including a bridge crossing at Smith Avenue.	
3	Complete phase three, addressing all challenges and concerns including a crossing at Remington Avenue, at Reid and Kern Streets, and material to be used on elevated portions between Thomasville High School and Schley Street.	
4	Complete phase four, addressing all challenges and concerns including safety concerns along very secluded easements and material to be used on elevated portions of trail.	
5	Complete phase five, addressing all challenges and concerns including crossing multiple railroad tracks on narrow elevated bridges on Martin Luther King.	
6	Complete phase six, addressing all challenges and concerns including underground utilities located on the north and south sides of street and crossing Remington Avenue at Reid and Kern Streets. Complete trailhead connector, addressing all challenges and concerns including acquiring property for proposed route.	

